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SUBJECT: FINLAND: BROAD SUPORT FOR UN REFORM

REF: SECSTATE 4746

1. (U) Charge delivered reftel demarche to Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja on January 25. She underscored the importance the U.S. attaches to UN reform by emphasizing our instructions to deliver the demarche at the ministerial-level. Tuomioja welcomed the initiative and indicated broad agreement with the U.S. on our shared UN reform agenda. The Foreign Minister-- a committed multilateralist with a deep interest in advancing global human rights-- indicated that sound reforms in NY and Geneva were a top priority for the GoF. Finland was "half-satisfied" with the September agreements coming out of the World Summit, and with subsequent progress in some areas, especially the Peacebuilding Commission; however, management reform, the Human Rights Council, and the Security Council remained thorny and complicated issues.

2. (U) MGMT Reform: Finland strongly supports the Outcome Document and agrees that improved ethics and oversight are needed to ensure effective use of UN resources. Redundant resources should be redirected to different initiatives. The top management reform priority should be giving the UNSYG the needed tools to do his or her job. The GoF supports increased UNSYG authority over resource redeployment and hopes to work closely with the U.S. to achieve this.

3. (SBU) Human Rights Council: The Charge emphasized the importance of this initiative, citing the lack of credibility of the Commission for Human Rights after electing Libya as its chair and failing to sanction major human rights abusers like Cuba and Sudan. Tuomioja agreed with the need for reform; however, he took issue with the efficacy and credibility of the Commission, opining that there were some solid achievements to its credit despite the obvious shortcomings. The Foreign Minister said the successor Human Rights Council had to be at least as effective as the Commission, which meant NGO participation, effective global human rights definitions and guidelines, and appropriate use of country-specific resolutions. The composition of the Council was problematic. The GoF favors a larger Council to maximize Finland's opportunity for membership; a figure close to the size of the Security Council was too small. On excluding egregious human rights offenders, Tuomioja said using sanctions as a litmus test was a possibility, but that this had its drawbacks too, and he was not fully convinced it was a good idea. Ongoing intra-EU debate on these issues was complicated and compromises would be necessary.

4. (SBU) Security Council: Tuomioja said that even if an agreement could not be reached at this stage, it was important to keep the dialogue moving. Finland supports the "G-4 Resolution," and officially supports German and Japanese permanent membership. Finland opposes new veto powers for any new members, and, "in a perfect world," would support the elimination of all vetoes. Finally, even if no ideal solution could be found, Tuomioja hoped that the Security Council could at least be made more representative of the international community.

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